



NIAGARA FALLS
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14305

116 Timon Hall, P.O. Box 1932, Niagara University, NY 14109

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

**Inventory, Catalog, Maintenance/Conservation, and Assessment
of Niagara Falls Public Library’s Local History Collection**

October 5, 2018

The Niagara Falls Public Library (Library) is soliciting written proposals from qualified firms or individuals (Consultant) to inventory and catalog the Library’s Local History Collection, determine a triage list for maintenance or conservation, and assess the value of art and art related objects within the collection.

The project scope, content of proposal and Consultant selection process are summarized in the RFP. Proposals must be received no later than 5:00 pm on November 5, 2018. All responses must be in a PDF and have the Consultant’s name as well as “Local History RFP Response” in the saved file name and in the subject line of an email, submitted to Christine Bacon, Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, via email at christine@discoverniagara.org. Please submit one PDF that includes a response to the RFP, as well as three professional references that are directly relevant.

Proposals will not be accepted after the date and time stated above. Incomplete proposals that do not conform to the requirements specified herein will not be considered. Issuance of the RFP does not obligate the Library to award a contract, nor is the Library liable for any costs incurred by the Consultant in the preparation and submittal of proposals for the subject work. The Library retains the right to award all or parts of this contract to several bidders, to not select any bidders, and/or to re-solicit proposals. The act of submitting a proposal is a declaration that the Consultant has read the RFP and understands all the requirements and conditions.

For questions concerning the anticipated work, or scope of the project, please contact Christine Bacon, Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, via email at christine@discoverniagara.org. Answers to questions will not be provided by telephone. Rather, answers to all questions or any addenda will be emailed to all proposers.

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I. BACKGROUND

A. A Brief History of the Niagara Falls Public Library & the Local History Department

Library services in Niagara Falls began in 1814, when an association of citizens under the direction of General Parkhurst Whitney founded the "Grand Niagara Library." The fledgling library consisted of 40 books.

Through the 19th Century, services improved, and by 1852 the collection had increased to 502 volumes housed in a small room in the Third Street School. Outgrowing that room, the library was then moved to the Frontier Mart on Falls Street. From 1850 to 1898, James F. Trott, "Father of Niagara Falls Schools," served the library and applied to the New York State Education Department for a legal charter.

While awaiting the Charter, the library moved to two large rooms in the Arcade Building on Falls Street, opening its doors on February 1, 1895. Finally, on February 28, 1895, the Charter was signed by Melvil Dewey and the Niagara Falls Public Library was officially opened.

By 1898, the collection consisted of 5,000 volumes supervised by Adele Barnum, the first paid librarian. Growing pains continued and, by 1901, Niagara Falls Power Company Director William B. Rankin came to the rescue by securing a \$50,000 grant for a library building from Pittsburgh Steel magnate Andrew Carnegie. A site at the corner of Main Street and Ashland Avenue was chosen, and in 1904, the library moved into spacious new quarters with marble floors, brass fixtures and room for 13,134 volumes.

The Carnegie Building served the community for 70 years, through wars and changes in social values into the period of the city's greatest population growth (101,063 in 1961). When books began to overflow onto the floor, however, thoughts turned to building a larger library. The effort to manage the growth culminated on March 9, 1974, when the Earl W. Brydges building, designed by architect Paul Rudolph, officially became the home of the Niagara Falls Public Library, where it remains today.

By the time the library celebrated its Centennial in 1995, it contained more than 400,000 printed volumes, periodicals, audio and video tapes, and a wide variety of other publications and documents.

As of 1995, a vibrant Local History Department, containing more the 10,000 books and thousands of pictures and other ephemera, worked to preserve the rich history of Niagara Falls. The **mission of the Local History Department** is to is to save Niagara Falls, New York's past. It does so by collecting and caring for books, published and unpublished documents, audio-visual media, and three-dimensional objects that document the history of what is now the City of Niagara Falls, New York from prehistoric times to the present, and making these resources accessible to the public. The library holds these materials in trust for future generations. Therefore, they can be examined in the local history room only.

B. Current Library Condition

The Earl W. Brydges building is in a state of physical deterioration. Done in the Brutalist architectural style, its foundation is failing, causing portions of the main reading room to be closed to the public. The roof is also failing, causing water infiltration and collection damage. Finally, the heating system is currently non-functional.

While the building's physical condition places the Library's entire collection at risk, the Local History Collection is particularly vulnerable. Housed on the third (top) floor of the Library, it bears the brunt of water infiltration, which has already damaged several items. In addition, the lack of a functional HVAC system combined with moist conditions has begun to allow mold to be a problem.

C. The Local History Collection Today

A "Report of a Preservation Survey of the Local History Collection" was completed in December, 1995, which identified the size of the collection as of that date (listed below). Significant additions to the Local History Collection have been made since 1995. Incomplete records prevent a comprehensive accounting of the collection, but it includes the following items, all of which are included within the scope of this RFP:

1995 Inventory:

- 9,500 books, 500 of which are rare
- 6 linear feet of manuscripts
- 100 volumes of newspapers
- 1,000 maps (dating from the 19th century)
- 100's of pieces of art on paper
- 25 posters
- Photographic materials
 - 50 linear ft. of prints
 - 10 linear ft. of glass negatives
 - 1 linear ft. of slides
- 600 reels of microfilm
- 100 items of audiovisual materials: tapes, records, films

Acquisitions Since 1995/Uncatalogued Items:

- Carborundum Collection
 - 50 linear feet of photographs, ledgers, correspondence, blueprints, architectural drawings, etc.
- Ohnsorg Collection
 - 21 linear feet of etchings, lithographs, maps, etc.
- Niagara Gazette photograph collection
 - 62-70 linear feet

- Niagara Falls Historical Society Collection.
 - 40 linear feet in the catalog
 - 20 linear feet of Cataract Hotel/Bath Island registers
 - 222 museum objects
- 35-45 linear feet of glass plate negatives
- Oil paintings (some of these may have been included in the 1995 “100’s of pieces of art on paper”)
- 14 linear feet of Lantern slides
- Numerous uncatalogued items of objects, art, photographs, and ephemera

II. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The scope of services will include (but is not limited to) the following:

- Determine whether items in the Local History Collection can remain in place pending completion of the tasks identified in this RFP or whether they should be moved to a more secure location first.
- Prepare an Emergency Plan for the Local History Collection.
- Inventory all items within the Local History Collection.
- Ensure proper labeling and record dimensions.
- Reconcile all data with existing collection catalogues, PastPerfect and ArchivesSpace. This includes adding items where missing, condition report notes, provenance information, and correcting existing data errors.
- Examine each item in the Library’s Local History Collection and assess its current condition.
- Create an existing conditions assessment of items in the Local History Collection with a triage approach that identifies objects facing the greatest risk.
- Estimate the repair cost for each item in materials and conservator time.
- Make recommendations on which repairs should be prioritized.
- Develop a list of recommendations for any necessary repairs, including an assessment of the materials required and whether the item should be sent to an outside conservator lab or if the repairs can be made on site by another consultant at a future date.
- Assess and document the general value of each art and art related object within the collection.
- Recommend items for possible deaccessioning; assess and document the general value of each item so identified.
- Create a digitization plan for all items in the Local History Collection.
- Provide deliverables including:
 - A written inventory of the Library’s Local History Collection including all findings regarding:
 - existing condition
 - maintenance and repair requirements
 - value

- deaccession recommendation
- any other relevant findings
- A presentation to Library staff and board of directors on the findings.

III. PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

A. Tentative Schedule (dates are subject to change)

- Issue RFP to potential bidders: October 5, 2018
- Questions Due: October 19, 2018
- Site visits: October 22 and 25, 2018
- Proposals due from potential bidders: November 5, 2018
- Complete Selection Process: December 5, 2018
- Award of Contract: January 2019
- Notice to Proceed: February 2019

B. Insurance –Before commencing work, the Consultant shall furnish the Library, for review and approval, evidence of the following insurance coverage:

<u>Coverage</u>	<u>Amounts</u>
Workers' Compensation	Statutory Limit
Comprehensive General Liability	Bodily Injury \$500,000 per occurrence; \$1,000,000 aggregate
	Property Damage \$500,000 per occurrence
Automobile Liability	Bodily Injury \$500,000 per person \$1,000,000 per occurrence
	Property Damage \$500,000 per occurrence

After the Contract is awarded, the Consultant shall provide the Library with Certificates of Insurance evidencing the above referenced coverage. The insurance carrier must be licensed to do business in the State of New York. The Library and the City of Niagara Falls shall be named as additional insureds with respect to liability coverage. Failure to provide and maintain the insurance required shall permit the Library to terminate a Contract.

In addition, payment and performance bonds may be required.

IV. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

A. Site Visits

All interested parties will be able to visit the Library's Local History Department on October 22, 2018 at 1:00 pm and October 25, 2018, 2018 at 11:00 am. If interested in visiting, please confirm your attendance with Christine Bacon at christine@discoverniagara.org or 716-286-8069.

B. Proposal Contents

Consultants responding to this RFP must provide the following information in their proposals.

1. **Title Page.**

The title page should include - Inventory, Catalog, Maintenance/Conservation, and Assessment of Niagara Falls Public Library's Local History Collection, and the name of the firm(s) or the Consultant team, address, telephone number, name of contact person, e-mail address, FAX number, and date. The names of those authorized to make representations on behalf of the Consultant, their titles, addresses, and phone numbers must be included.

2. **Letter of Transmittal.**

The letter of transmittal should concisely describe the Consultant's understanding of the work to be performed. Explain the Consultant team's process, and how it proposes to complete the Scope of Work.

3. **Time and Cost.**

The Consultant must provide an all-inclusive cost, including all fees, materials, travel/mileage and/or reimbursables. In addition, the Consultant must provide an estimated timeline for completion of the work. The successful Consultant shall be expected to honor the cost schedule identified in their proposal for the duration of the contract, unless modified by mutual agreement in writing.

4. **Documentation of Past Experience, Qualifications, and References.**

Provide information about the Consultant's experience in working on similar projects. Information should include project summaries and descriptions of the firm/individual's involvement in the projects, the dates the work was performed, references for these projects and whether key persons assigned to these projects are still with the firm and available to work on this project.

Further, Consultant should include information regarding their knowledge of principles and practices of professional library/archive registrations; collections management standards and procedures; principles and practices of library records management and related data collection techniques; and ability to conduct inventory procedures with tact, ingenuity, and assertiveness.

Provide a sample of a comparable project demonstrating ability of key consultant staff assigned to the project. This sample should include an example of a condition assessment and inventory data.

5. Staffing.

The Consultant must identify the specific people/person who will manage and execute this project, their resume (s) and a description of their experience and qualifications. Consultant should confirm that these key staff have the described availability to work on the project consistent with the proposed project schedule.

C. Submission

Proposals should be submitted to Christine Bacon, Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, via email at christine@discoverniagara.org no later than 5:00 pm, November 5, 2018. Late submissions will not be accepted.

All submittals must be in PDF format and have the Consultant's name as well as "Local History RFP Response" in the saved file name and in the subject line of an email. Please submit one PDF that includes a response to the RFP, as well as three professional references that are directly relevant to this proposal.

D. Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the selection criteria below:

1. Client References – 20%
2. Costs – 30%
3. Project understanding and approach. – 50%

The Library reserves the right to consider information in the selection process that is independently derived. Proposal responses will be evaluated, rated and ranked by committee. The selection will be made based on the proposal offering the best overall value, and that which is most advantageous to the Library.

The Library reserves the right to reject any and all submissions.

Thank you for your interest in working with the Niagara Falls Public Library. We look forward to receiving your Proposal.

I. NONDISCRIMINATION AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICIES

It is the policy of the Library to comply with all federal, state and local laws, policies, orders, rules and regulations which prohibit unlawful discrimination because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or marital status, and to take affirmative action in working with contracting parties to ensure that minorities and women share in the economic opportunities generated by the Library's participation in projects and initiatives, and/or the use

of Library funds. Respondents should describe how they intend to provide for the meaningful participation of minorities, women, minority business enterprises and women business enterprises in the performance of this contract.

ATTACHMENT A

Niagara Falls Public Library Local History Department –

Collections Management Policy (Excerpts)

COLLECTION OBJECTIVES

The Local History Department's primary objectives are to:

1. *Maintain a Research Library with Special, Non-circulating Collections* comprised of published materials, manuscripts, photographs and other original sources related to the evolution of Niagara Falls, New York. The **primary** focus of the collection is published material, manuscripts and archival material, including photographs and other visual images pertaining to all aspects of the history of the area encompassed by the present city. The collection aims to document the social and economic activities of ordinary people as well as the community's elites.

2. *Maintain a limited collection of artifacts* with the same **primary** geographic focus as above. The extent of the artifact collection will be determined by factors such as the availability of space to properly store and care for materials, the availability of staff to provide care and access. At present the Local History Department seeks to refine its existing collections to conform with the guidelines below. It is not actively seeking additions to the collection, but will accept appropriate items when they conform to the stated guidelines. Areas of interest and special emphasis are:

- *Fine and Decorative Arts*, with particular emphasis upon paintings, engravings, prints, and photographs, glass, ceramics that illustrate the scenic beauty of Niagara Falls, technological innovation in the city, the economic, industrial, and transportation development of the city, and urban life and institutions.
- *Every day Artifacts*, with particular emphasis on items that offer insight into Niagara Falls' unique identity. Specific areas of interest are items indicative of:
 - a. Industrial products, processes and innovations
 - b. Tourism, including the hospitality industry
 - c. Daily life in the city's diverse population
 - d. Life on the international border
 - e. Social and political movements
 - f. Community leaders
 - g. Labor relations

The Local History Department's **secondary** objectives are to maintain collections necessary to illuminate the relationship of the City of Niagara Falls, New York to its region, to the State of New York, and the United States. To that end, it will *selectively* collect published, unpublished, graphic and artifactual materials related to:

1. *Niagara County history*. Such materials will have specific bearing on the economic and social development of the city and its people, *e.g.* material related to the War of 1812, the Robert Moses Power Plant, Bell Aircraft, etc.

2. *New York State and Southern Ontario history*. Materials in this category could relate to the regional development of hydroelectric power and related industries, the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837, binational economic development efforts, cross border transportation, etc.

3. *United States history*. This category includes materials necessary to provide the background to place the history of Niagara Falls in the context of the broader sweep of national history.

Note that collecting in these secondary areas will be very limited.

DEACCESSION POLICY

The Local History Department recognizes that it has a responsibility to preserve its collections so that these materials are publicly available both now and in the future. Storage, exhibition space, staff time and conservation funds are limited. Therefore, objects which do not meet the stated collections policy will not be added to the collection. Further, items which are already in the collection will be subject to evaluation in light of the best contemporary research. This process may result in the removal of particular materials, objects or group of objects from the collections in accordance with the Department's Deaccession Policy.

A. DEFINITION

DEACCESSION is the process of removing permanently from the collections specific archival materials or object(s). The deaccession process shall be cautious, deliberate, scrupulous and shall be thoroughly recorded in writing.

B. DEACCESSION CRITERIA

- Materials and objects to be considered for deaccession must meet at least one of the following criteria:
- The materials or object is outside the Department's Mission Statement, and its Acquisition Policy.
- The material or object lacks physical integrity.
- The material or object has failed to retain its identity or authenticity.
- The material or object is a duplicate of another item in the collection.
- The Department is unable to preserve or store it properly.
- The material or object has deteriorated beyond usefulness, is infested beyond control of an exterminator, or poses a threat of physical harm to other objects in the collection, the staff or the public.